

**Statement of Congressman Christopher H. Smith, Chairman
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations**

**“Germany’s World Cup Brothels: Women and Children
at Grave Risk of Exploitation”
May 4, 2006**

Ladies and gentlemen, in one month, athletes and fans will be gathering for one of the premiere, world-wide sporting events of our day, the 2006 FIFA World Cup. Today the Subcommittee will hear testimony on reports that the World Cup will sadly be an impetus for the exploitation of women. For most soccer fans like myself, this quadrennial spectacle is the showcase of world class athleticism and teamwork, but looming in its shadow is the very real potential that the World Cup matches will be a catalyst and magnet for sex trafficking into Germany.

The World Cup opens on June 9, and over the course of one month at 12 venues throughout Germany, national soccer teams from around the world will be playing. Millions of fans will join in the festivities. For the last year, the German Government has been preparing for this sports bonanza, coordinating security efforts with all neighboring countries, and attending to the myriad of details associated with such major international events. There is no doubt that human traffickers have also been working overtime to exploit this opportunity to improve their illicit revenues through the expected rise in demand, especially in the so-called sex industry.

Today we join our counterparts in the European Union who have expressed their worries that there will be an explosion of prostitution and trafficking during the time of the World Cup. The European Parliament rightfully recognized in their resolution passed on March 15 that major sporting events result in a “temporary and spectacular increase in the demand for sexual services.” A number of actions were outlined that should be undertaken by Germany and their European neighbors, as well as by the sports associations involved, to warn potential victims and assist those who are trafficked, to “roundly condemn trafficking in human beings and forced prostitution”, and to inform and educate the general public and potential clients in an effort to curb the demand.

During the February meeting in Vienna, as Head of the U.S. Delegation and as Special Representative on Human Trafficking for the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, I vigorously raised concerns about the trafficking prevention efforts for this event. I was joined by other European parliamentarians who were sobered by the expectation that, especially since the matches are being held in Germany which legalized pimping and prostitution in 2001, the World Cup fans would be legally free to rape women in brothels or even in mobile units designed specifically for this form of exploitation. Of the approximately 400,000 prostitutes in Germany, it is estimated that 75 percent of those who are abused in these houses of prostitution are foreigners, many from Central and Eastern Europe.

Europeans and Americans are not the only ones who have trained their eyes on this explosive situation. Vivi Akakpo, West Africa coordinator for the All Africa Conference of Churches said, "It is now public knowledge that organized syndicates have plans to bring in young women, particularly from eastern Europe and from other poor countries, to Germany in time for the World Soccer Cup 2006." The EU Justice and Home Affairs Council meeting last week adopted a commendable list of best practices which should be undertaken by member states holding major international events. Among the seven initiatives was the commitment to develop and implement measures that discourage the demand for trafficking victims.

All EU member states to some extent are affected by trafficking in women. Significant numbers of trafficked women coming to Germany are from Ukraine, Bulgaria, Russia, Belarus, Lithuania and Romania. Law enforcement reports that large enterprises and international networks run an organized "industry" with political support and economic resources in countries of origin, transit and destination. Corrupt officials are often implicated.

Traffickers use a variety of methods to recruit and move their victims, often utilizing legal avenues to illegally traffic women and children. Legitimate travel documents can be obtained for "trips to Germany" for the women and such documents as visas and passports are used to cross international borders, after which the trafficking victims disappear or overstay their visas. Traffickers, however, also use fraudulent documents to obtain genuine travel documents or use altered or counterfeit papers, thus making it more difficult for law enforcement to detect a trafficking victim.

Those that work with the victims of human trafficking have reported that trafficking of women and girls for the so-called sex industry usually heightens during international sports events. According to the BKA (the German Federal Criminal Investigation Office) annual report in 2001, an inquiry of 414 trafficked women revealed that 45% were forced into prostitution through violence, torture, rape or intimidation. Research conducted by Melissa Farley at Prostitution Research & Education found that 71% of women surveyed were physically assaulted while engaged in prostitution and 89% wanted to escape prostitution.

I am aware that the German Government is supporting public awareness efforts regarding trafficking for forced prostitution in the context of the World Cup. This is a somewhat absurd effort given that the infrastructure of legalized prostitution allowed in Germany is gearing up to expand its capacity during the World Cup and there is every reason to believe that the "new recruits" into prostitution will be trafficked women and girls. I see this as flagrant state complicity in promoting sex trafficking.

As Sister Lea Ackermann, the Catholic nun in Germany who founded SOLWODI – SOLIDARITY with Women in Distress, has declared, "We have decided to flash the 'red card' to those prostitution profiteers" who are taking advantage of the World Cup crowds. The president of the German Soccer Federation, Theo Zwanziger, came to the conclusion that they needed to change the Federation's position on prostitution after he

became aware of the horrors that women forced into prostitution face. As the federation president has recognized, "We did underestimate the whole issue [of prostitution] and I regret that, I say it quite openly."

Ladies and gentlemen, it is time for Chancellor Merkel to take a stand and speak out against the exploitation of women and children in the name of sport. I would encourage her government to turn the tables beginning now with the World Cup, and commit to reversing Germany's laws on prostitution. We can all join together in the fight to combat human trafficking and make the forced prostitution of women and girls more difficult for the traffickers.

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act requires that every year the United States Department of State analyze and report on the problem of trafficking in persons around the world. If Germany is providing direct or indirect sanction for sex trafficking, then Germany does not deserve to be ranked as a tier one country.

As the world will turn its attention to soccer, those committed to ending the tragedy of trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation will be watching how Germany protects the most vulnerable. I look forward to hearing the perspective of the witnesses today. I hope that the German Government is listening, too.